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# Modern Missions in South America

The Missions of South America through Persecution, Suppression and Revolutions.

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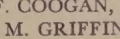

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# Modern Missions in South America

THE MISSIONS OF SOUTH AMERICA THROUGH PERSECUTION, SUPPRESSION AND REVOLUTIONS

*By*

STEPHEN MCKENNA, C.SS.R.

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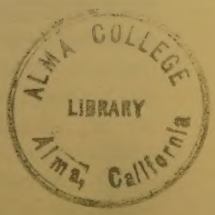


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# Introduction

1. The colonies of Spain and Portugal in the New World were thoroughly Catholic. Church and State were united and cooperated in the building of churches, schools and hospitals. While at times the civil authorities were guilty of grave acts of injustice towards the native races, yet in general what H. Bolton has written is true: "The Latins considered the Indian worth civilizing and his soul worth saving. This was due largely to the influence of the Church." The success of their missionary work cannot be denied. "It may be safely alleged that so vast a region of savagery has never elsewhere been pacified with so much patience and so little violence." When Negro slaves were imported from Africa at the beginning of the 16th century zealous priests and Religious, like St. Peter Claver, S.J., sought to win them over to Catholicism. The gravest injury done to the missions during this colonial period came in 1767 when King Charles III ordered the expulsion of the 2,260 Jesuits from the Spanish colonies. Their famous "Reductions" in Paraguay and in other parts of South America, where they were ministering to more than 700,000 Indians, soon became but a heap of ruins.

2. The wars against Spain that were fought in the colonies from 1810 to 1824 marked a distinct setback for the Church. While some of the clergy played a leading part in the movement for independence the majority were pro-Spanish in their loyalty. This was due partly to the fact that a large number of them, especially the bishops and other important ecclesiastics, had been born in Spain, and partly to the fear that the overthrow of the monarchy would be followed, as had happened in France a few years before, by a violent persecution of the Church. By the time the colonies had achieved their independence many of these ecclesiastics had voluntarily returned to Spain or had been driven into exile. Death, too, had taken its inevitable toll of their num-

ber during these years. There were no adequate replacements since the chaotic conditions caused by the long drawn-out wars had forced most of the seminaries in America to close. As a result, in 1824 many dioceses were vacant, and many parishes and mission-settlements were without priests or Religious to direct them. Thus the Church in South America was deprived of effective leadership at a critical moment in her history, a fact that explains to some extent the disasters that overtook her in the course of the 19th century.

3. At first all went well. The republics in Spanish America and the empire of Brazil, which had become independent of Portugal in a bloodless revolution, continued the policy of union with the Church and allowed no other religion but Catholicism to be publicly practised. But within a very short time trouble arose concerning the Patronato Real, the term applied to certain rights over the Church which the Spanish and Portuguese kings had formerly enjoyed. The new governments claimed that they, as the lawful successors of Spain and Portugal in South America, could justly exercise the Patronato Real because it was an integral part of their sovereignty. The Vicars of Christ, on the contrary, had always regarded the Patronato Real not as an inherent right of the civil authority but as a mere privilege, which they could either grant or refuse according to circumstances of time and place. In their eyes the civil officials were interfering in ecclesiastical affairs, which did not concern them, and were following a principle that tended inevitably to make the Church but a branch of the State. Later on in the 19th century men came into power, often by violence and revolution, who were even more antagonistic. Imbued with purely material ideas they resented the supernatural teachings of the Church, the privileges that she enjoyed, and her rights over education, marriage and the social life of the people.

4. This hostility showed itself in the separation of the Church and the State, in recognizing the validity only of a civil marriage, in prohibiting religious instruction in State schools, and in encouraging or at least tolerating the teaching of doctrines that undermined the very basis of Christianity. Almost every nation of

South America, at some time or other during the 19th century, waged a Kulturkampf against the Church by imprisoning or exiling bishops and priests, confiscating ecclesiastical property, and driving out the members of religious communities.

5. The effects of this anti-Catholic legislation and of these persecutions were disastrous. (a) The Catholic Church, though the religion of the vast majority of the people, lost influence by being placed on the same level with the most insignificant sect. (b) Respect for the Sacrament of Matrimony was lessened and invalid marriages, concubinage and illegitimacy became only too common. (c) The prohibition of religious instruction in the daily curriculum of the schools meant that most of the poorer people would grow up in ignorance of their faith; for their poverty prevented them from building and supporting parochial schools as is done in the United States. (d) The expulsion of the religious communities, who were the principal, and in most places, the only group working among the Indians and Negroes, deprived these people of almost all spiritual care. In some cases, when the wave of anti-clericalism had spent itself or a government more friendly to the Church came into power, the missionaries could return and build anew; but in others irreparable harm had been done, and the people reverted to the vices and superstitions that they had practised before the coming of Christianity.

6. In recent years throughout South America the violent hostility towards the Catholic Church has disappeared. All the nations there, except Paraguay, have diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Catholic colleges and universities have been founded, so that the so-called Liberals no longer have an exclusive monopoly on higher education. The two leading nations of the continent, Argentina and Brazil, have changed their policy towards religious instruction and now allow it to be taught in the government-supported schools. Eucharistic Congresses in important cities have everywhere met with an enthusiastic response. New bishoprics, vicariates and prefectures have been created in order to attend more effectively to the spiritual needs of the people. Religious communities from Europe and the

United States are welcomed by the governments and often receive from them a free grant of land and financial assistance. Nevertheless, the Church has not fully recovered from the wounds she received during the 19th century. Many sections of South America may still be looked upon as mission territory. In some respects the work of the missionaries there is even more difficult than in countries that are mostly pagan.

7. The shortage of priests and Religious, so evident after the wars for independence, is still one of the fundamental weaknesses of the Church in South America. While we shall later prove the truth of this statement by specific facts, it will not be out of place here to indicate some of the reasons why such vocations are so few: (a) The hostility shown towards the Church in the various countries has left in the minds of many well-meaning Catholics a low estimate of the priesthood and the religious life. (b) In South America we meet the extremes of wealth and poverty; there is no strong middle-class from which in Europe, the United States and Canada such vocations have usually come. Worthy candidates for the priesthood have been prevented from going ahead because neither they, nor the diocesan authorities, nor the religious institute were able to pay all the necessary expenses. (c) Many children in South America are born out of lawful wedlock, or of an invalid marriage, and thus they contract the stigma of illegitimacy, which is a canonical impediment to entering the clerical or religious state. (d) The rate of illiteracy in many countries is higher than 50 per cent, which means that more than half of the boys and girls there do not have an opportunity to obtain even a minimum amount of knowledge. In places where they can go to school the government does not always allow religious instruction, and there are too few priests and nuns to give them a systematic training in their religion after school-time. Children brought up under such circumstances will hardly ever aspire to become priests or nuns. (e) During the years when many young men might have been in a seminary or religious community they were forced into military service, because of the numerous revolutions that have weakened so many countries in South America both politically and economically.

8. Another defect in the Church in South America is the distribution of the clergy. The majority of the priests are stationed in the large centers of population, while the country-districts are generally in crying need of priests. The reason for this is that as a pastor, curate, professor or chaplain in a city the priest can obtain a decent livelihood, whereas in the rural areas, where the people are very poor, he would have to lead a life of continual self-abnegation.

9. There is, finally, another point that needs to be emphasized, for it is generally overlooked in books on the Church in South America. The shortage of Sisters is almost as grave as that of priests. A comparison will bring this out. In Brazil, where there are 40,000,000 Catholics, we find only 15,000 nuns and many of these are from foreign countries, whereas in the United States, with a Catholic population of 25,000,000, there are 140,000 nuns. Moreover, cloistered communities, that emphasize a life of solitude and retirement from the world, have a greater appeal to women in South America than in our country, and often there is a long waiting list of applicants. In Peru, for example, almost all the members of the contemplative Orders are native-born, while the same is not true of institutes that are engaged in teaching, caring for orphans, the sick, etc. Thus the pastors in South America are burdened with duties that in the United States are performed by the Sisters. While foreign Religious communities have helped the Church in South America immeasurably by sending some of their members there, they could never do so in sufficient numbers to remedy the situation. Even this supply was seriously curtailed during World War II when travel between South America and Europe, whence most of the Religious had come, was entirely prohibited.

10. The topography of South America is also a great hindrance to missionary work. Along the whole Pacific Coast from the Caribbean area to Tierra del Fuego, a distance of 4,400 miles, are the Andes mountains which often rise to heights of 12,000 or more feet above sea-level. The rugged terrain makes it not only difficult but at times hazardous for the priest to visit

his widely-scattered flock. Then there is the tremendous basin of the Amazon, the very heart of South America, for it includes most of Brazil and parts of Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. Here are to be found jungles, forests, marshes, arid wastes, and torrential rains unknown in North America. The continual heat and humidity of this area tends to weaken the constitution of those accustomed to a colder climate, while in some places malaria, dysentery, tuberculosis and tropical diseases are a real menace to the health of the missionaries. The means of transportation are quite inadequate. One example will suffice to illustrate. Brazil, which is larger than continental United States and is one of the progressive nations in South America, has 20,000 miles of railroad and 127,000 miles of paved highways, while the United States has 250,000 miles of railroad and 2,250,000 miles of paved highways. In many places on this continent the priests must travel for days on horseback, on foot or by boat before they can meet all the people of their parish, which is often larger than many a diocese in the United States.

11. Protestantism and Communism are also a hindrance to the Catholic Church in South America. The Protestants, who come mainly from the United States, have had their greatest success in the larger cities. Very often the principal result of their labors is not the winning of converts, but causing Catholics to become indifferent in the practice of their faith. Because of the vast financial resources at their disposal they are a potential threat to the Church in the country districts, where they supply the poor and the sick with the material things they need so urgently.

12. In South America, as in so many other parts of the world, Catholicism and Communism are engaged in an uncompromising struggle. Though the Communists are few in numbers, about 300,000 in a population of 80,000,000, they are well-organized and extremely active. The fact that their leaders are natives and not foreigners is a tremendous asset. They know the language, the mentality and the customs of their fellow-countrymen, and are able to exploit to the full the undeniable injustice

of the economic system, characteristic of every South American country, where wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few families, while the rest of the people suffer from poverty, malnutrition, and labor under conditions often little better than slavery.

13. The missionary work among the Indians of South America, who form approximately 12 per cent of the total population, presents special difficulties: (a) It is impossible to state exactly just how many groups of Indians there are on the continent, but that their number is very great may be judged from the fact that in the republic of Colombia alone there are said to be about 100 different tribes. The majority of these Indians, especially the women, speak and understand no other language but that of their own tribe. Vocations to the clerical state are extremely rare among these Catholic Indians. For example, there has never been an Aymara Indian of Bolivia ordained to the priesthood, even though they have been Catholics for more than 400 years. Thus before the local clergy can work effectively among the Indians they must first learn their languages, which are difficult in themselves, and in some cases the Indians even refuse to teach their language to outsiders. (b) A few of the Indians in Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela are still savages and have resisted all attempts at conversion. (c) It is impossible to convert some of these tribes because they are nomadic by nature and wander about from place to place. (d) The peaceful and civilized Indians, who live in small communities or on reservations, are almost everywhere in South America the poorest and most illiterate class. Seldom have the civil authorities undertaken any systematic plan to raise their economic or intellectual standard; on the contrary, they have often allowed them to become the victims of dishonest businessmen. Such a policy naturally makes the work of the missionaries much more arduous; for even where the Indians are not bitter towards their political and economic masters, "they regard themselves," to quote Paul Radin, an authority on this subject, "as definitely set off from the whites and from much of the culture which they have introduced."

# 1.

# Argentina

14. Argentina is the second largest country in South America, being equal in size to the whole of the United States east of the Mississippi and having a population of about 14,000,000. Her soil, which is ideal for agriculture and cattle-raising, has attracted settlers from abroad, more than four and one half million arriving there between the years 1857-1917. With the exception of a few thousand Japanese, most of these immigrants were from Europe, with Italy and Spain furnishing the largest number. About two-thirds of the people live within a 500 mile radius of Buenos Aires. Since the Indians and Negroes form but an insignificant minority, Argentina is not troubled by the racial problems of most South American countries.

15. In spite of the political quarrels during the first decades after independence, there was seldom any cause for serious friction between Church and State. When domestic peace was finally restored a new Constitution was drawn up in 1853 and is still the basic law of the land. It granted freedom of worship to all religions, but at the same time stated explicitly that the president of the country must be a Catholic. The main trouble for the Church was that the lack of priests and the indifference of too many Catholics about their religion enabled the Masons and the "Liberal" party to gain control of the government. During the Eighteen-Eighties, when this latter group was at the height of its power, they summarily expelled the Apostolic Delegate, recognized only a civil marriage, and forbade the teaching of religion in the State schools. But these hostile acts had a beneficial effect in arousing the Catholics from their spiritual

torpor. For example, in no other nation of the continent has Catholic Action become better organized or more active than in Argentina. Its influence upon the public life of the nation is unmistakable. Within the past few months it gained a very striking triumph when religious instruction was again allowed in the curriculum of all the State schools.

16. The Constitution of 1853 declares that the government is to cooperate with the Church in promoting the conversion of the Indians. But this law remained a dead letter for more than twenty-five years because the fierce and powerful tribe of the Araucanians in Patagonia, the bleak and arid table-lands to the south, prevented all attempts of the white man to settle in their territory. The government finally forced these Indians to surrender, but only after a bitter war that lasted from 1879 to 1883. With the invading army of General Roca went the Salesian Fathers, who had arrived in Buenos Aires a few years before. St. John Bosco realized the marvelous opportunities that Patagonia offered to the zeal and self-sacrifice of his sons, and he himself trained the first missionaries who went there, among them being the future Cardinal, John Cagliero. The systematic conversion of the people in this region really began when things returned to normalcy after the war. In 1883 the Holy See erected the vicariate of Patagonia North and the Prefecture of Patagonia South, both of which were confided to the Salesians. In 1916 this prefecture was suppressed and became a part of the vicariate, which was raised to the rank of a diocese in 1934 with Viedma as the cathedral city.

17. At the present time there are only forty-nine Salesians and nine secular priests, together with a few nuns of the Congregation of Mary, Help of Christians, laboring for the spiritual needs of more than 300,000 Catholics in this region. Their task is indeed tremendous, for the diocese of Viedma covers an area of more than 400,000 sq. miles, the climate is very rigorous, and the means of transportation very unsatisfactory. In order to help these self-sacrificing priests and nuns, the practice has become quite common in recent years for the religious communities of men and women in Buenos Aires and other large Catholic

centers to send some of their members on an annual mission-trip to specified localities in Patagonia. They go from house to house, assemble the people for Mass, prepare the children and very often the adults for Baptism and first Holy Communion. With funds provided by generous lay Catholics they are able to provide these people, especially the Indians who live in extreme poverty and squalor, with food and clothing.

18. Conditions are little better in the northern part of Argentina. For example, Redemptorist missionaries some years ago came across the Macovi Indians in the Chaco district, who had not been visited by a priest in more than fifty years. In a town called Goya they found only 270 out of 850 Catholic couples who had been validly married in the eyes of the Church. The principal reason for the appalling religious ignorance and moral laxity in this section is due to the shortage of clergy, and to the fact that the people generally live in small, isolated communities, or on ranches. Thus in the Nineteen-Twenties there were only four Franciscan priests stationed in the Gran Chaco, which covered an area of 34,000 sq. miles and had a population of 84,000. The number of priests there is still pitifully small, even though the Holy See in 1939 established the bishopric of Resistencia in the Gran Chaco. To the west of this diocese near the Bolivian border is the see of Jujuy, where there are twenty priests for the 121,000 Catholics, and to the east is the diocese of Corrientes with 638,000 Catholics and ninety-six priests. Perhaps the one bright feature of this whole picture is the part of the diocese of Corrientes known as Missiones because so many of the Reductions were once located there. The members of the Society of the Divine Word are working there with a skill and zeal worthy of the Jesuit pioneers of the 17th and 18th centuries.

# 2.

# Bolivia

19. The history of Bolivia since becoming a republic has been a troubled one. From 1826 to 1898 there were sixty military uprisings, ten different Constitutions were promulgated, and six presidents were assassinated. The 20th century, too, has been marked by political and social unrest, which often leads to a revolution as in 1946, when the government was overthrown and President Villarroel was put to death in an ignominious manner. The wars against Argentina and Chile in the 19th century and against Paraguay in the 20th century meant a loss of vital manpower, of land, and of an outlet to the sea. As a result Bolivia is today one of the poorest nations in South America.

20. These wars and revolutions have naturally hindered the development of the Church, but the constant interference of the government in ecclesiastical affairs has done the greater harm and helps us to understand the present state of Catholicism. There are two striking instances of this: (a) The Archdiocese of Sucre, which contained more than half of the parishes in Bolivia, was kept vacant for thirty-four years in the 19th century because the civil authorities refused to accept the men proposed for this office by the Holy See. (b) During the period from 1830 to 1859 all seminaries had to be closed and the students were obliged to study in the State universities, where often anti-Catholic doctrines were defended.

21. When the seminaries were allowed to be opened there were only seventeen theological students in the whole country. It

is, therefore, not to be wondered at if some men who were unfitted both intellectually and morally found their way into the priesthood, and that the number of priests has been pitifully small. For instance, during the period from 1900 to 1930 only forty-five priests were ordained for the see of La Paz. At the present time there are only 227 native-born members of the diocesan clergy in Bolivia, though Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion of the 3,500,000 inhabitants. The best way to realize what this means is to contrast the Archdioceses of La Paz and Philadelphia, which have about the same number of Catholics. In 1946 La Paz had 107 priests (sixty-three of whom were foreigners), while Philadelphia had 1,703. Even with the 216 priests from other countries the proportion of priests to the people in Bolivia is about one for 8,000.

22. This shortage of priests means that many parishes are without any resident pastors. The topography, too, makes priestly work very difficult. In the western part, where most of the people live, are the Andes Mountains and the so-called montaña, which are respectively 12,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level. The eastern part, which comprises two-thirds of the whole country, consists mainly of swamps and jungles, where the land is flooded by the continuous rains from November to May, and where drinking water can hardly be obtained during the drought from June to October. The lack of money has prevented the government from overcoming these natural obstacles. For example, Bolivia, which is equal in area to Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin has only 3,710 miles of paved highways, while these seven mid-western states have 688,800 miles.

23. Very often the priest in the country can visit the people of his parish only at rare intervals. Redemptorists have preached missions in localities where a priest had not been seen for twenty-five years. As a result, the majority of the people know very little about their faith. The remarkable thing is that they have remained so loyal to the Church in spite of the intensive propa-

ganda that Protestants have been making in Bolivia since the early Nineteen Hundreds. The government in its efforts to stamp out illiteracy, which is estimated as high as 80 per cent, has begun to realize the part that religion plays in the life of the people. Therefore, in 1942 President Peñaranda reversed the policy of the anti-clerical government of 1900, and made the teaching of the Catholic religion an obligatory subject in the State schools for all Catholic children.

24. The shortage of priests and the geographical barriers are not the only problems that the Church in Bolivia faces. An even greater one is that of the Quichua and Aymara Indians, who live in the plateau of the Andes or in the montaña. These two tribes number about 1,600,000 or approximately one-half of the total population. Ninety per cent of these Indians do not know or understand any language but their own. Since there are no members of either tribe among the clergy, the Spanish-speaking priests must acquire a mastery of at least one of these languages, if they wish to work effectively among them. Furthermore, these Indians were truly a neglected race. The rival political parties differed on many matters, but were agreed in keeping the Indians in subjection. The latter have at times so resented this injustice that they have risen up in revolt against the whites, and it usually required the mediation of the priest to ease the tension between the two races and to prevent unjust reprisals.

25. The refusal of the State to help the Indians meant that the whole burden of protecting them fell upon the Church. The late Pope Pius XI reminded the bishops and priests of this obligation, when he wrote to them in 1925, the year that Bolivia celebrated the centenary of its independence: "Not only is he [the Indian] abandoned but he leads an almost servile existence, subject to every kind of vexation and fraud . . . It is, therefore, right that you, Venerable Brethren and all the Clergy, heap upon him the consolations and charity of the Church . . ." Fortunately, at that time there were three men in the hierarchy who had done missionary work among the Indians and knew

their problems thoroughly: Pierini, a Franciscan, Archbishop of Sucre; Sieffert, a Redemptorist, Bishop of La Paz; and Antesana, a member of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Bishop of Oruro. To translate the papal program into reality became the principal aim of all their endeavors. They did not, of course, succeed at once. Misunderstandings, failures, calumnies, were often their reward, for deeply-rooted abuses are not easily eradicated. But they did finally convince the civil authorities of the gravity of the problem and of the necessity of taking action for the rehabilitation and education of the indigenous races.

26. The "Indian Question" is even more formidable in eastern Bolivia. Whereas in the Andes and the montaña there are the Quichuas and Aymaras, here there are many more, "cuyo número solo Dios conoce," as one Bolivian writer expresses it. In a scholarly book on these Indians Alfred Métraux gives the names of thirteen linguistic groups and says that there are also other languages spoken among them which have not been classified, because they have not been studied by a trained linguist or are known only through a short word-list. Some of these tribes have been in contact with the whites since colonial times, others only since the recent rubber boom, while the rest have maintained their independence and follow the same mode of life as their ancestors did centuries ago. While none of these Indians are warlike, their degree of culture is uniformly low. Some of them are nomadic by nature. Through disease and famine the number of these Indians steadily declined throughout the 19th century.

27. The Jesuits had preached to some of these eastern tribes, but after their expulsion very little was done for them, either materially or spiritually, with the result that the well-organized "Reductions" slipped back into the half-barbarous condition in which they have remained up to the present. It was only in 1823, almost half a century later, that the spiritual reconquest began with the arrival of a Franciscan, Father Lacueva. In

spite of great physical hardships and insults from the Indians he succeeded in establishing three settlements of Christian Indians. The full effects of his work were not realized, however, until the 20th century. In 1917 the Most Reverend Rodolfo Caroli, the Apostolic Internuncio to Bolivia, made a visitation of the whole country. As a consequence of his recommendations, Pope Benedict XV in that same year made the department of El Beni a vicariate which was entrusted to the confreres of Father Lacueva from Spain. Two years later, in 1919, he created the vicariate of Gran Chaco which was given to the Italian Franciscans.

28. In 1930 the Franciscans from Austria were placed in charge of the newly-created vicariate of Chiquito, which had been the principal scene of Father Lacueva's labors. But the Franciscans, especially the Spaniards in El Beni, the largest of the three vicariates, were too few in numbers to provide adequate spiritual care for all the people. Affairs reached a crisis during the civil war in Spain (1936-39) and the outbreak of World War II a few months later. No replacements could be sent from Spain, and the missionaries in Bolivia were growing fatigued with the extra burdens they had to carry. In 1942, therefore, a part of El Beni was used to form two new vicariates, called Pando and Reyes. At the request of Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, the Prefect of Propaganda, the Maryknoll Fathers from the United States assumed control of Pando, while the French Redemptorists, who had been in western Bolivia since 1910, began the evangelization of Reyes.

29. At the present time there are sixty-three priests in the five vicariates. About thirty-two Franciscan nuns are in El Beni, Gran Chaco, and Chiquito; twelve Maryknoll Sisters are in Pando, while up to the present there is no community of female Religious in Reyes. In spite of the little financial aid they receive from the government these missionaries have built churches, and also medical dispensaries, which are so vitally a part of missionary work in so unhealthy a climate. Religious instruction is provided by the priests, Sisters or trained lay catechists who visit

the State schools at fixed periods. It is worthy of note that all of the priests in eastern Bolivia and all of the nuns, with only two exceptions, are foreigners. In fact, five nations are represented in the five vicariates: Italy, France, Spain, Austria and the United States. Thus we see here in miniature a picture of the unity and solidarity of the Catholic Church, and a proof of the spirit of charity that leads men and women in the prime of life to give up the conveniences of civilized society, to endure the continual rains and the arid droughts, in order to preach to the poor, neglected and despised Indians in their swamps and jungles the truths of the Gospel, and to bring to them the joys and consolations of the Catholic religion.

# 3.

# Brazil

30. Brazil occupies approximately three-fourths of the southern continent and surpasses in numbers the combined population of all the other South American republics and colonies. More than half of the Brazilians are white; they are either the descendants of the early Portuguese settlers or of those who have come from Europe during the past fifty years. The rest are full-blooded Indians, Negroes and Japanese, but, since intermarriages have been common, there is an admixture of various racial strains in many of the people. With the exception of the Indians, who are ordinarily found in the interior of the country, most of the inhabitants live in the territory along the Atlantic coast with the heaviest concentration in the southeastern area.

31. In 1822 Brazil passed quietly from a colony of Portugal to that of an independent empire. While the new government was officially Catholic, yet a spirit of hostility gradually showed itself, especially during the long regime of the Emperor Pedro II (1831-89). At times he confiscated the property of the Church, suppressed religious communities, and allowed doctrines, such as Materialism and Positivism, to be openly taught at the State colleges and universities. The men who deposed the emperor in 1889 and two years later proclaimed a republic were also antagonistic towards the Church. They declared that marriage was only a purely civil contract, forbade the teaching of religion in the public schools as well as the establishment of new religious institutes. Freedom of worship was granted to all denominations, and Catholicism was no longer recognized as the official religion.

32. The separation of Church and State was not an unmixed evil. It freed the bishops from the shackles of royal despotism and enabled them to begin the reorganization of dioceses, parishes and seminaries, in accordance with ecclesiastical law, and to meet the grave problems caused by the large influx of settlers. In the Eighteen-Nineties and during the opening decades of the 20th century people from all parts of Europe, particularly from the Catholic countries of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland came to Brazil in such large numbers that the population increased from 14,000,000 in 1890 to 41,000,000 at the present time. The work of reorganization has accomplished some marvelous results. In 1890 there were less than ten sees in the whole of Brazil; in 1945 there were 17 ecclesiastical provinces with 52 suffragan sees, 25 prelatures nullius, and 2 prefectures. The law against new religious institutes was repealed, and Orders and congregations in Europe and the United States came to Brazil to labor for the people of their own nationality and those of the native races. Higher education for Catholics has made striking gains, and what is especially significant, the Constitution drawn up in 1946 placed religious instruction as an obligatory subject in the regular schedule of the government schools. But in spite of this undeniable progress there is much that remains to be done.

33. The overwhelming majority of the people in Brazil are Catholics, and yet there are only about 6,000 priests and 15,000 nuns. Half of these priests and a good proportion of the nuns are from foreign countries. The Bishops of the São Paulo province, the largest in Brazil, frankly stated the reasons for the failure of native vocations in a Circular Letter of 1942: "A Christian home ought to glory in seeing one of its sons aspire to the high dignity of minister to the Lord of Lords. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in Brazil and it is the fault of all of us. It is because we have not seriously occupied ourselves with this problem, so grievous for the present and for the future of a Catholic nation."

34. This shortage of priests is not so apparent in the cities of the Atlantic seaboard, but is keenly felt in the four largest states of the interior, Pará, Goiaz, Mato Grosso, and Amazonas,

which have a population of more than two million, and constitute one half the area of Brazil. For example, in Mato Grosso, the second largest state in Brazil, there is not a single secular priest, and the religious communities, composed mostly of foreigners, are lacking in sufficient personnel. Thus in the Redemptorist parish of Ponta Porã, Mato Grosso, there are only four priests to care for 50,000 souls in a parish, that is twice the size of Massachusetts. The Xingu mission of Pará has three Fathers of the Precious Blood to care for the 15,000 Catholics in a territory covering 110,000 sq. miles. The government has done little to improve the means of transportation in these four states. Hence the priest must often travel for days on horseback or by boat under a burning sun in order to meet all of his people, who live in widely-scattered ranches or in small villages along the banks of the Amazon or its tributaries. The insects and mosquitoes are not merely a nuisance but can easily become a menace to one's health. The missionaries must be extremely careful about food and drinking water lest they contract dysentery, malaria, or a similar disease. In some parts of these regions there are no doctors, hospitals, or even the ordinary medical facilities and a sickness might easily lead to death or to some permanent physical disability.

35. Thanks to the heroic self-sacrifice of these Religious, most of the people of even the most abandoned localities of the interior are generally baptized. They pride themselves on being Catholics, and Protestantism has made little progress among them. But owing to the long decades of spiritual neglect, the lack of schools, and the inability of the present-day missionaries to give them any systematic instruction, many are ignorant of their religion, do not realize the importance of Mass or the Sacraments, and have little regard for the laws of God or of the Church. Superstitious beliefs and practices are also quite common, and judging from the literature on the subject as well as the testimony of priests in the region, spiritism is one of the gravest and most common errors. Often a well-meaning but ignorant Catholic will go to Mass in the morning and will think nothing of going to a séance in the evening.

36. Special mention must be made of the Indians who, with but a few exceptions, live in Amazonas, Goiaz, Mato Grosso and Pará. The empire of Brazil neglected these Indians, and only within the last fifty years has the republic adopted the plan of an army officer, Silva Rondon, and set aside reservations for them. The official policy towards the Indians is to give them as much freedom as possible; therefore, it does not compel them to work, to attend school, or to perform military service. While some reservations are Protestant most of them are composed almost exclusively of Catholic Indians. Where the reservation is near a settlement of whites the parish priest takes care of them; this is the case, for instance, in all of the Redemptorist parishes in Amazonas and Mato Grosso. But where it is far removed from inhabited places, Religious are placed in charge. The principal institutes working for the Indians are the Capuchins, the Jesuits, Franciscans, Benedictines, Vincentians, Salesians, Claretians, the Fathers of the Holy Family, and of the Precious Blood. There are also many communities of women engaged in this same work for the Indians. They teach their children in school, and care for their orphans, sick, and aged.

37. The Indians on these reservations are quiet and peaceful. The men as a rule are familiar with Portuguese, but the missionaries must know something of the native language. It is usually the only one that most of the women can speak or understand, for they seldom mingle with outsiders. Some of the officials in charge of these reservations are bad or indifferent Catholics, and, since they do not value religion in their own lives, hinder rather than help the work of the priests. Since the Indians are generally illiterate, it requires infinite patience to impress upon them even the simplest truths of our faith. The reluctance of many of them to engage in any steady work means that they are poor, undernourished, and easy victims of disease. The squalor in which they live often turns their homes into breeding-places for vice.

38. The interior of Brazil, especially the unexplored region between the Xingu and Araguaia Rivers, has always been noted for its savage tribes. As a rule they do not fight unless attacked, but occasionally they will raid a village of the whites or of some

peaceful Indians. Thus on March 13, 1901 the Gorioes tribe, aroused against the missionaries by the calumnies of an apostate Catholic, destroyed in a few hours the flourishing Christian community of Alta Allegre in the State of Maranhão, killing twelve Capuchin priests, lay-brothers and Sisters, together with about 100 of the lay Catholics.

39. Various religious communities have tried to convert these savage tribes, and in some instances have achieved a measure of success. One who deserves to be remembered is Father Gil Villanova, O.P. (1851-1905) sometimes called "The Apostle of Araguaia." At times, however, their efforts have not only ended in failure but in tragedy. Thus on November 1, 1934 two Salesians, Fathers John Fuchs and Peter Sacilotti, were brutally murdered by the Chavantes, perhaps the fiercest tribe in South America, as soon as they entered their territory to preach the Gospel. Since that date missionary work among these savages has been at a standstill. But the proposed new air-route between Rio de Janeiro and the United States will necessitate the building of landing-fields in the Xingu-Araguaia area. Since these tribes will also have to be civilized we may again see verified the saying of Tertullian: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." The successors of Fathers Fuchs and Sacilotti in the not too distant future may preside over a Catholic community composed of the once savage Indians.

# 4.

# Chile

40. Chile has a population estimated at 5,300,000. Of these about 80 per cent are whites, 15 per cent are Mestizos, and 5 per cent are Indians. Since a large part of Northern Chile is a parched, sunburned desert, and the south is bleak and cold owing to its proximity to the Antarctic, most of the people live in the central part, which is noted for its temperate climate and its fertile, agricultural valleys. Catholicism is the predominant religion; the number of priests in 1946 was 1,715 of whom 984 belong to the regular clergy; there were 260 teaching Brothers, and about 4,500 Sisters.

41. From the above statistics about the clergy it is evident that Chile has the highest proportion of priests in South America, one for every 3,000 people. But there are three observations worthy of note: (a) 683 of the 1,715 priests came from Europe and the United States. In the year 1945 not a single priest was ordained in five dioceses, though they had a combined Catholic population of more than one million Catholics. (b) 885 of these priests were stationed in the two dioceses of Santiago and Valparaiso; since the Catholics of these two places formed only about one-fourth of the total population, there were only 830 priests for the rest of the country. As a consequence of this unequal distribution of the clergy, in some parts of the north there is only one priest for every 12,000 people. (c) The rugged terrain of northern and southern Chile has prevented any extensive building of railways or highways, thus obliging the pastors to use slow and tedious modes of transportation. Off the coast of Chile are many small islands, where the Catholics are either too few or too

poor to support a resident pastor. Owing to the roughness of the sea, the priests from the mainland can visit these isolated people only at rare intervals.

42. Twelve per cent of the Catholic children of Chile attend the private schools that are conducted by Religious; the other 88 per cent go to State-supported schools where religious instruction is allowed in all the primary grades and for three of the six years in the lyceum, the equivalent of our American high school. But a recent survey has shown that only about one out of every nine public schools is visited regularly by a priest. Trained Catholic lay teachers would supply this deficiency, but, unfortunately, the teaching profession in Chile is dominated to a great extent by the Masons and anti-clericals. Thus the greater part of the Catholic children attain to manhood and womanhood with but a haphazard training in their religion. The Methodists and the Presbyterians from the United States have realized this fact and have been waging a vigorous campaign among the poorly-instructed Catholics. But the Communists are the most powerful anti-Catholic force in the country. They have won over many of the "rotos" ("broken men"), as the poorer members of the working class are often contemptuously called, and also have a tremendous influence over the laborers in the copper and nitrate mines, that are so vital in the economic life of the nation. President Videla was forced to admit three of the Communists into his cabinet in 1946, and thus for the first time in the Western Hemisphere the Communist party became a controlling factor in the government. While these three men have since been removed, Communism still remains the most serious menace to the future of the Church in Chile.

43. The largest and most important tribe of the Indians in Chile are the Araucanians who number approximately 115,000. They were able to remain independent during the three centuries of Spanish rule and were not finally conquered until 1882. They were gradually deprived of their lands so that today most of them have been restricted to the region between Arauca and Temuco. This territory was made a prefecture in 1848 and entrusted to the Italian Capuchins, who remained there until

1900, when their confrères from Bavaria assumed control. This prefecture was elevated to the rank of a vicariate in 1928. The Capuchins have had to face great difficulties in their work, for these Indians are inclined to polygamy, drunkenness, and are fickle in character. Besides, some of them have become imbued with revolutionary, and more recently with communistic ideas. Nevertheless, much has been accomplished. In 1900 there were only ten churches or chapels, while now there are eighty-five. The number of schools has grown in like proportion, there being 123, according to the directory of 1946. During the past half century approximately 180,000 Araucanians have received the benefit of a Catholic education. This success has been due, in part, to the Missionary Catechists, a religious Congregation which the Capuchin Vicar Apostolic, the Most Rev. Guido Beck, founded in 1931 to aid his priests in their parochial activities. Native vocations are also being encouraged. A number of Indian women have already become Religious. At present there is only one Araucanian priest, but others have already begun their preliminary studies for the clerical state.

44. At the southern extremity of Chile is the region known as Magellanes after the great Spanish explorer. The number of inhabitants is about 50,000, a large proportion of whom are immigrants from Jugoslavia. The Indian tribes, the Onas, Alakalufes and Yamanas, who a few years ago numbered 12,000, have been reduced by drunkenness, disease and the cruelty of the white man to a few hundred. Throughout the 19th century Magellanes was visited by priests of various religious institutes. In 1883 the Holy See created a prefecture here and entrusted it to some secular priests; the first and only prefect, Monsignor Joseph Fagano, labored heroically in this abandoned mission-field until his death in 1916. In that same year Benedict XV raised this prefecture to a vicariate, which was to include Tierra del Fuego, and the Falkland Islands. The Salesians were placed in charge and have been the only resident clergy there since that date. At present there are 49 Salesian priests and lay-brothers, 56 Sisters of Our Lady, Help of Christians, and 13 Sisters of Charity. Their task is a most arduous one, for the vicariate

covers an area of approximately 60,000 sq. miles, the climate is very rigorous, and the means of transportation are among the worst in the whole of South America. The work, however, is progressing; the faith of the Catholic is preserved and new converts added mainly through the Catholic primary, secondary and trade schools, which are attended by about 2,000 pupils.

45. Almost directly north of Magellanes is the territory of Aysen. It was practically unknown until the late Nineteen Twenties, when the richness of its soil was discovered and sheep and cattle raisers came there in great numbers. The Bishop of Ancud, to whose diocese Aysen belonged, quickly realized the impossibility of caring for the sudden influx of settlers, for his diocese was approximately 70,000 sq. miles and he had only forty priests. At his request, therefore, the Servite Fathers from Venice arrived there in 1937. Three years later, on February 17, 1940 the Holy See separated this territory from Ancud and made it a prefecture. The three Servite Fathers, who are the only resident clergy, have a difficult time in ministering to the 22,000 Catholics who live as a rule on ranches widely separated from one another. Another obstacle is that many of the people are only seasonal workers and wander about from place to place. Thus it is almost impossible to give them any systematic instruction in their religion. The majority of them, therefore, are ignorant of what the Church teaches, do not bother much about Mass and the Sacraments, and are also indifferent about the observance of the marriage laws, concubinage being especially prevalent.

# 5.

# Colombia

46. Colombia is the third largest country in South America, having a population of about 10,000,000. Of these 30 per cent are whites, 40 per cent Mestizos, 18 per cent Mulattoes, 7 per cent Indians and 5 per cent Negroes. The Church, which had to suffer much at the hands of the anti-clericals during the 19th century, has experienced a remarkable revival in recent years. More than 90 per cent of the people are listed as Catholics, while the Protestants, who have been very active in the rural areas for many decades, number about 15,000. Colombia is the only country in South America that has a concordat with the Holy See. It was signed in 1888 and has been regarded by ecclesiastical historians as a model of the relations between the Church and the State. According to articles 12 and 17 of this important document, religious instruction is obligatory in all the State-supported schools, colleges and universities, and the marriage ceremony is to be conducted in conformity with canon law. The main weakness of the Church is the lack of priests, for there are only about 2,000 in the whole country; in some sections a priest must minister to more than 15,000 Catholics. But the number of vocations to the clerical state and the religious life is steadily growing. During the past sixty years, for example, eight native sisterhoods have been founded, a record that no other country in South America can duplicate. Nowhere else on this continent does the future of Catholicism seem brighter or more promising than in Colombia.

47. Throughout most of the 19th century the Church was obliged, because of the shortage of priests, to concentrate her

main efforts on preserving the faith of the whites and Mestizos who lived on the elevated plateau between the eastern and western cordillera of the Andes. The Negroes, Mulattoes, and Indians along the coast, in the tropical valleys, or in the jungles of the eastern section were to a great extent abandoned. The suppression of religious institutes by President Mosquera in 1861 meant the break-up of many settlements of the Indians, who soon reverted to the beliefs, practices and vices of their pagan ancestors. But in the closing decades of the 19th century the hierarchy asked the Catholics of Europe to send recruits for their mission territory. Various Religious communities, the Capuchins, Vincentians, Augustinian Recollects, the Claretians, Jesuits, Carmelites, Missionaries of the Company of Mary ("Montfortists"), the Christian Brothers of La Salle, the Marist Brothers, together with a number of sisterhoods, answered their appeal. Most of these Religious came from Spain. In order to delimit this vast area, and to systematize the work of the missions the Holy See in the course of time created four vicariates: Caquetá, Casanare, Llanos de San Martin, Goajira, and eight prefectures: Arauca, Chocó, Labateca, Magdalena, San Jorge, Tierradentro, Tumaco and San Andrés y Providencia. The last named prefecture was founded in 1912 and assigned to the Mill Hill Fathers from England, since most of the people on this island spoke English. But this Congregation was unable to staff the churches properly and in 1927 the Spanish Capuchins took charge.

48. The obstacles that these pioneers had to face were tremendous: (a) As already mentioned there were about 100 different tribes in Colombia and most of them spoke and understood only their own dialect. (b) Some of the tribes, such as the Goajira and Motilones in Goajira, the Aricas and Tetes in Llanos de San Martin and Caquetá, and the Paeces in Tierradentro were savages, and hated the whites because of the injustices inflicted upon their ancestors. (c) The long decades of spiritual neglect had caused the Indians and Negroes to become addicted to superstitious beliefs and practices, as well as to many vices. (d) The government had never bothered about improving this part of the country and the means of transportation and the con-

veniences of civilized society were almost entirely wanting. (e) The climate in many places is very unhealthy and not a few of the Religious had to cut short their missionary career because of sickness.

49. These difficulties have not hindered the spread of the Gospel. New priests, Brothers and Sisters came to replace those who had died or returned home because of ill-health. At the present time there are about 500 missionaries of both sexes in these vicariates and prefectures. According to the latest available statistics, there are about 500 churches or chapels in this region, about the same number of schools with approximately 18,000 pupils, 25 orphans asylums and 40 medical dispensaries. From the ten printing establishments have come forth catechisms, books of devotion in the native dialects, and even scholarly brochures on the Indian languages, customs and traditions, a knowledge of which is a tremendous asset in the work of conversion. The missionaries have overcome many of the geographical barriers by building roads and bridges. In these vicariates and prefectures there are already three seminaries with sixty students, and it is only the lack of finances that has prevented the Religious from accepting more candidates. The results achieved in making the people appreciate their faith, in the frequentation of the Sacraments have been nothing short of phenomenal. Greater progress has naturally been made in some localities than in others. Thus the Capuchins in Caquetá have won over the majority of the pagan Indians to Catholicism, while their confrères in Goajira have made very few converts among the uncivilized Goajirans and Motilones. The material benefits, which the missionaries have conferred upon these neglected people, have won the highest praise even of the anti-clericals and account in great part for the favorable position which the Church in Colombia now enjoys.

50. The Catholics of Colombia have not relied exclusively on foreign religious communities to provide for their missions, as do most other South American countries. Some of the native sisterhoods, for instance, are dedicated exclusively to the evangelization of the Indians, Negroes and Mulattoes. The outstanding figure

in this respect is the present Bishop of Santa Rosa de Osos, the Most Reverend Miguel Builes, popularly known as "The Missionary Bishop." As a young priest he had labored among the uncivilized Indians of his native land and realized the need of men specially trained for such work. In 1927, three years after his elevation to the episcopate, he founded a seminary at Yarumal "to form priests who would dedicate their lives to the evangelization of the savages and semi-savages . . ." His only financial resources were, as he expressed it, "his infinite confidence in the Providence of God." But the work prospered. The seminary had forty-seven students in 1928, and sixty-eight in the following year. A novitiate for the training of these future missionaries was opened in 1932.

51. There are now fifty-one students in the major seminary and 230 in the preparatory seminary. The priests from Yarumal labor in the vicariate of Caquetá and in the Prefecture of Magdalena. Pius XII, who honored Yarumal by making it a pontifical seminary, in 1945 entrusted to the priests trained there the newly-created prefecture of Laboteca. To help these priests in their work, Bishop Builes in 1929 also founded a sisterhood, The Missionary Sisters of St. Therese, which at the present time has twenty-three foundations and 184 members. It is due to him, at least in part, that the Catholics of his native land have become "mission-minded," and that the "Missionary Union of the Clergy," of which he is president, has been a success since its inception in 1937. The Catholics of Colombia in 1945 contributed more to the support of the missions, in proportion to their numbers, than the Catholics of any other country in the world except the United States and Canada.

# 6.

# Ecuador

52. The present population of Ecuador is estimated at 3,200,000. Of these about 1,600,000 are Mestizos, 1,000,000 full-blooded Indians, 350,000 whites, and 250,000 Negroes and Mulattoes. The whites are the highest social class and control the political and economic life of the nation. A few of the Mestizos enjoy a fairly high standard of living, but the majority of them, together with the Negroes and Indians, cannot read or write. They are also extremely poor, undernourished, and live and work under the most unsanitary conditions. "As a consequence," to quote a semi-official report, "we find that diseases, especially the infectious types, abound; that the tuberculosis rate is very high, and that the infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world."

53. Since the year 1830, when Ecuador became a republic, there have been many revolutions. The Constitution has been repeatedly changed and very many of the chief executives have been unable to complete their allotted term of office. The overthrow of the government of Arroyo del Rio in 1944 has failed to bring Ecuador the peace that she needs so much in order to settle her many domestic problems. The history of the Church, therefore, has varied with the party in power. Conservatives, like García Moreno, President from 1861 to 1865, and again from 1869 to 1875, have encouraged and favored the Church. On the contrary, liberals, such as Alfaro, President from 1897 to 1901 and again from 1907-11, suppressed Religious Orders, confiscated church property, secularized marriage and education and forbade the entrance of any foreign clergy. While anti-clericalism

is still strong, there has been greater harmony between the Church and State in the 20th century. At the present time there are no laws which hinder the clergy in the work of the ministry. Religious institutes from other countries are not only allowed but even welcomed.

54. We can best see the effects of this political instability, the poverty and illiteracy of so many Mestizos and Indians, and of the anti-Catholic legislation by examining the status of the Church in the Sierra, i.e., the elevated plateau between the eastern and western ranges of the Andes, in the region along the Pacific coast, and in the so-called Oriente, the eastern section comprising approximately two-thirds of Ecuador. In the dioceses of the Sierra there are approximately 900 priests for the 1,800,000 inhabitants, an average of one priest for every 2,000 people. But a number of these priests are old and sickly, or engaged in teaching or as chaplains. Hence pastors and their curates are everywhere working under constant pressure, and in the rural sections must contend with a mountainous terrain and poor means of transportation. In the two dioceses of the Pacific coast, Guayaquil and Puerto Viejo, the shortage of the clergy is appalling. In the former see, to which the Maryknoll Fathers came in 1943, there are about 100 priests for 800,000 Catholics, and in the latter see nineteen priests for 360,000 Catholics.

55. In the Sierra and along the coast there are to be found in or about almost every city and town a settlement of the principal Indians of Ecuador, the Quichuas. Referring to them, an eminent authority on Ecuador states very frankly: "With rare exceptions the entire Indian race is the poorest and the most wretched class." While a few of the Indians who have gone to school are familiar with Spanish, the greater majority, especially the women, can speak and understand no other language except their native tongue. In order to work effectively among them the priests must learn to speak and to preach Quichua, as the Redemptorists do in their churches and on the missions. But unfortunately some of the clergy do not bother to master this difficult language. In some places, therefore, the Indians are

spiritually abandoned, do not know their religion, and have become victims of deplorable vices. Yet they have never lost their attachment to the Church, and Protestantism has made but few converts. Thus admits Kenneth Grubb: "From North to South of Ecuador after more than thirty years of work . . . there are less than 300 members of the Evangelical churches." Worthy of special praise are the Sisters of Mary Immaculate, one of the native sisterhoods of Colombia, who came to Ecuador in 1937, in order to devote themselves to the evangelization of the Quichuas. From their five communities they set out in groups of two on their missions, the so-called "ambulancias," visit the Indians in their homes, instruct them in their religion and prepare them for the reception of the Sacraments. They willingly make the sacrifice of daily Mass and Communion, for the nature of their work requires them to remain outside of their convents in places where no Catholic Church is readily available.

56. The Oriente of Ecuador, which consists mainly of forests, is inhabited by semi-savage and savage Indians. The Jesuits built many "Reductions" there. But their expulsion, the confusion caused by the wars for independence, the struggle for power between the rival political powers, and the exploitation of the indigenous population by the civil officials sent there by the government reduced the missions to a deplorable condition. The attempts to reorganize them by the Franciscans, the Mercedarians, the Dominicans, and the secular priests from the diocese of Quito in the first half of the 19th century met with but little success. A revival of interest, however, began when the government of García Moreno signed a concordat with the Holy See in 1862, in which it pledged itself to give all possible aid to the conversion of the pagan Indians who were then said to number about 100,000. Indian communities that had been broken up were brought together again and new converts were gained. In a few years the missions were in a flourishing state. The hostility of later anti-clericals towards religious institutes hindered, but did not destroy the good that had already been done.

57. At the present time five religious institutes of men have been assigned to the vicariates and prefectures of the Oriente: the

Missionaries of St. Joseph of Turin in the vicariate of Napo, the Salesians in the vicariate of Mendez y Gualaquiza, the Franciscans in the vicariate of Zamora, the Dominicans in the prefecture of Canelos, and the Discalced Carmelites in the prefectures of San Michele de Sucumbios and Esmeraldas, the latter being erected only in 1945. The Congregations of St. Dorothea and of Mary, Help of Christians, are the principal sisterhoods in this region. Very many of these Religious are from Italy.

58. The greater part of the Indians have been won over to Catholicism. The exceptions are the Auca tribe in Napo and the Jivaros in Mendez y Gualaquiza. The Jivaros are noted for their warlike qualities and in colonial times won striking victories over the Incas and Spaniards, who invaded their territory. Their conversion is, humanly speaking, almost hopeless. They regard vengeance as a sacred virtue and, therefore, keep alive a feeling of bitter hatred towards the whites, who were formerly so cruel to their tribe, and to them the missionary is but the forerunner of white domination. Moreover, to embrace Christianity would mean the renunciation of vices and practices, such as polygamy, to which they are much addicted and which, by custom, they consider to be perfectly legitimate. Finally, the women of these tribes, though degraded and treated as beasts of burden, have a horror of the priests. The Salesians, who have been in charge of this vicariate since 1893, have been devoting their principal efforts to winning over these Indians by means of a Catholic education. They have built two schools at Macas, one for boys and another for girls belonging to this tribe, and in this way have won over several thousand of them. These Catholic Jivaros are living in three well-organized communities. The Salesians are hoping that these converts will in time lead the main body of the Jivaros into the one true fold.

# 7.

# Paraguay

59. The history of the Church in Paraguay has been a sad and unfortunate one. In colonial times the Jesuits had built there a number of "Reductions" for the Guarani Indians, but after King Charles III forced them to leave the country, these natives gradually reverted to their former way of life; for there were few priests to direct them. Hardly had Paraguay won her freedom in 1814 than a man named Francia seized control of the government and ruled with dictatorial powers until 1840. He did not hesitate to confiscate ecclesiastical property, to expel Religious Orders, and even tried to create a schism between the Church in Paraguay and the Holy See. Francia was followed by his nephew, Carlos López (1840-62), who reduced the Church to one of abject dependence on the State. Francisco López, his son and successor, (1862-70) plunged Paraguay into a war with Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay that ended in a disastrous defeat. This long struggle from 1865 to 1870 so disorganized the Church that there were said to be only seven priests in the whole country when peace was finally declared. Since that time Paraguay has been troubled by revolutions, the latest of which began in the spring of 1947. These military uprisings have hindered the bishops in the government of their dioceses, disrupted parochial activities, driven men into exile or into the military service and created a feeling of bitterness and distrust among all classes of people.

60. In view of all these facts it is hardly a matter for surprise if Paraguay has had a shortage of clergy. For example, from 1881 to 1911 there were only sixty priests ordained, an average

of two each year for the whole country. In 1945 there were about 100 diocesan priests in a population of approximately one million, and almost all of these are in Asunción, the capital. Thus the diocese of Villarica had eighty parishes but only forty priests. It is usually very difficult for the country pastors to attend to all their flock. They can visit them once or twice a year, or perhaps only at even longer intervals. As late as the Nineteen Forties there were towns in Paraguay that had never seen a priest for many years. The poverty of the government has prevented the building of roads that are urgently needed in the rural sections. As a consequence particularly in the rainy season the priests find it almost impossible to travel to the out-missions that are attached to every country-parish.

61. This lack of priests means that the greater part of the people grow up in ignorance of their faith, for the law does not allow the teaching of religion during school time. Where possible the missionary will train a lay catechist to continue the instruction of the children and the adults. But this plan is seldom a complete success. The pupils soon lose enthusiasm and drop out when they realize that it may be a year or longer before the priest will return. Although the people have their children baptized and delight in fiestas and processions, far too many of them fail to realize the gravity of missing Mass on Sunday and of not living up to their other religious obligations. Thus many men and women content themselves with a merely civil ceremony at the time of marriage, which is the only one that the State looks upon as valid, or else live in concubinage. In 1934 Paraguay had the highest rate of illegitimacy of any country in South America, two out of every three children being born out of lawful wedlock. The people have grown so accustomed to this practice, which degrades womanhood and undermines family-life, that it is extremely difficult to convince many of them that it was something gravely sinful.

62. Up until the year 1929 Asunción was the only see in Paraguay and it was a suffragan of Buenos Aires. But in that year the Holy See decided to make the Church in Paraguay independent, raised Asunción to the rank of an archdiocese, and

created two new sees of Villarica and Concepción y Chaco. In answer to the urgent appeals of the members of the hierarchy, various Orders and congregations in foreign countries sent some of their members to Paraguay. But the number of these Religious, 256 (96 men and 160 women) was far from sufficient, for 165 of them were located in the Archdiocese of Asunción, though it contains only one-third of the total Catholic population. Thus there are only four Redemptorist priests stationed in the parish of Pedro Juan Caballero, in the diocese of Concepción, which covers an area of approximately 5,400 sq. miles. One difficulty that the missionaries from abroad have to face is the Guarani language. Paraguay has the unique distinction of being the only Latin American country, where a native Indian tongue is popularly spoken among all classes of the people, in spite of the fact that the government wants no other language but Spanish to be used in the schools. In most country-districts, unless a priest can speak and understand this language he finds it very difficult to win the confidence of the people, and must carry on his ministerial work through an interpreter—an obviously unsuitable method. One American missionary describes Guarani as "a real Indian language of monosyllables, grunts, and snorts, and hard to retain in one's memory."

63. Nevertheless, progress is undoubtedly being made. Preparatory seminaries for the priesthood are being planned for the diocese of Villarica and Concepción. The Salesians and the Jesuits are doing much to revive the spirit of Catholicism and of Catholic Action among the upper classes, and have been very effective in counteracting the Colegio International of Asunción, which since its foundation in 1920 has been a center of Protestant propaganda. One of the first things that the Redemptorists from the United States have done in their four parishes in this country was to begin the construction not only of a Catholic church but also of a parochial school. In 1943 they set aside one of the Sunday Masses for men exclusively, and in the following year published and distributed copies of a "Dialogue Mass" to be used by all of the people. Both of these experiments have been very successful; the men are gradually becoming convinced that

religion is just as necessary for them as for the women and children. Within the past two years attendance at Mass and Holy Communion has increased by about 500 per cent.

64. Very little, however, has been done up to the present for the few uncivilized Indians. Their nomadic form of life in the forests makes any systematic religious instruction practically impossible, for the few priests in the country are forced to devote their principal attention to the civilized but spiritually-abandoned Catholics. In the Chaco district the Prefecture of Pilcomayo was erected in 1925. At that time it was a part of Bolivia, but was transferred to Paraguay as a result of the changes in the boundaries following the war between the two nations in the Nineteen Thirties. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate from Germany and the Salesians have been assigned to this region in which are to be found the Indians who belong to the tribes of the Chulpies, the Angaita, and the Chomoco.

# 8.

# Peru

65. The number of people in Peru is generally estimated at about 7,000,000. Almost 90 per cent of them are either Mestizos or full-blooded Indians. The Quichuas, the descendants of the famous Incas, and the Aymaras are the two principal Indian tribes along the Pacific Coast and in the sierra of the Andes. In the montaña to the east of these mountains live the Indians, known under the generic name of the Chuncos. The whites in Peru number less than 10 per cent. The Negroes, Chinese and Japanese form but an insignificant part of the population.

66. There have been occasional evidences of hostility shown towards the Church in Peru throughout the 19th century, and only recently the government passed laws recognizing only a civil marriage as valid and permitting absolute divorce. But on the whole the relations between the Church and the State were more friendly than in any other country of South America, even though Peru has been noted for its political upheavals, revolutions and frequent changes in the Constitution. According to the latest census, about 94 per cent of the people are listed as Catholics; Catholicism is the official religion, and the teaching of Catholic doctrine is prescribed in all the government schools. It is surprising, therefore, to find that the Church in Peru has only about 1,500 priests. Of these about 750 are actively engaged in parochial or missionary work, which means about one priest for every 10,000 people. For example, Cardinal Guevara of Lima must keep twenty of his parishes vacant because of his lack of priests. In the diocese of Piura, with its 500,000 Catholics, there are nineteen diocesan and twenty Religious priests. The diocese

of Chacapoyas, covering an area of about 75,000 sq. miles, has only twenty-four members of the clergy. Religious institutes from abroad have come to the aid of the native clergy, but the need for more priests and Religious is still very urgent. With a few notable exceptions, such as the Redemptorists from France, the Maryknollers, the Marianists and the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart from the United States, and the Franciscans from Canada, all of the foreign Religious are from Spain.

67. The Mestizos and the Indians of the Sierra have been Catholics for centuries, and still many of them do not know and do not practice their religion, are superstitious, and given over to vice. This is especially true of the Quichuas and the Aymaras, who belong to the lowest social class, and whose lives are a continual drudgery. The primary cause of this state of affairs is, of course, the few members of the clergy engaged in missionary or parochial work. But there are two other factors that must be borne in mind. The first is that the instruction of these two tribes is made more difficult by the fact that most of them do not know or understand the common language of the country. The second is the topography of the Peruvian Andes which prevents the priest from coming into contact with his flock. The construction of the railroad from Lima to Oroya, a distance of only 200 miles, will be sufficient to illustrate. The engineers had to dig 65 tunnels, build 67 bridges, and lay tracks across the divide at an altitude of 15,665 feet. Father Hengbart C.SS.R., a veteran missionary among the Indians of South America, was hardly exaggerating when he wrote "Compared with the missions in Peru those in Ecuador are merely child's play." The Protestants from the United States, especially the Methodists, have been making strenuous efforts to win converts in the Sierra by building schools with the most modern equipment. It was eminently fitting, therefore, that the Catholics of the United States should use the same means to check their influence. The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from West Chester, Pa., and the Marianist Fathers from St. Louis, Mo., have been in Peru for many years, and by means of their schools have helped to raise the educational and moral standards of the people.

68. The obstacles to the preaching of the Gospel are even greater in the montaña than in the Sierra. (a) The Quichuas and the Aymaras had at least remained united with the Church throughout the 19th century, but the expulsion of the two principal missionary Orders in the montaña, the Jesuits in 1767 and the Franciscans after the wars of independence, left the Indians there in extreme spiritual abandonment. In fact, for many years there was only one priest, Father Plaza, in this territory that comprises almost the half of Peru. (b) While there is a certain uniformity among the Quichuas and Aymaras, the Chuncos, who are said to number about 350,000, are divided into numerous tribes, each clinging tenaciously to its own language, laws and customs. Some of them, such as the Incuninas and the Cashibas are still savages. (c) This whole region is covered with forests, where wild beasts and deadly serpents abound, and which is impenetrable except by rivers, or a few short trails to the rubber camps and the gold mines. The climate, too, in some places, e.g., along the Yavarin and Putumayo rivers, is a breeding-place for malaria and tropical diseases.

69. Since the opening years of the 20th century the spiritual reconquest of the montaña has been intensified. There are now four vicariates there. San Leon del Amazonas, or Inquitos as it is officially known since August 1, 1945, is in the hands of the Augustinians; San Gabriele dell' Addolorata is committed to the care of the Passionists; Urubamba y Madre de Dios is under the Dominicans; Ucayali is in charge of the Franciscans. All of these communities are from Spain. But the number of these Religious was insufficient for so immense a territory. On July 13, 1945, therefore, the Holy See separated a part of the vicariate of Iquitos, made it the prefecture of San José del Amazonas, and entrusted it to the Franciscans from Canada. On January 11, 1946 the Jesuits took over the new prefecture of San Francisco Javier, which was formed from the vicariate of San Gabriele dell' Addolorata and the dioceses of Cajamorca and Chachapoyas. Throughout this whole region the priests are ably assisted by nuns belonging to the Orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis, and to the Congregation of Mary, Help of Christians.

70. The heroic labors of these men and women are slowly bearing fruit. Most of the Indians, who but a few years ago were pagans or semi-civilized, are now Catholics. By means of the training which they have received from the missionaries they have become useful members of society. Very little success, however, has been registered thus far in the vicariates of Iquitos and Ucayali where the Indians are bitterly hostile towards the white man and the priest as threats to their independence. The only hope for the future in these places is to gain the good will of small groups of these Indians, give their children a solid training in the Catholic religion, in order that later on they themselves may be able to persuade their fellow-tribesmen to enter the true Church.

# 9.

# Uruguay

71. Uruguay is the smallest in size of all the South American republics. In 1828, when she became independent, there were only 65,000 inhabitants, while today there are about 2,200,000. This remarkable growth has been due mainly to the immigration from Italy, Spain and other European countries. The whites form about 90 per cent of the population with the remaining 10 per cent consisting of Indians, Mestizos, and Negroes. During the colonial period Spain and Portugal often waged war to annex Uruguay to their empire, and even in the 19th century she was often merely a pawn in the struggle between Argentina and Brazil for the domination of the continent.

72. The Church in Uruguay is the youngest of all those in South America. Throughout most of the colonial period the clergy were subject to the Bishop of Buenos Aires. In 1826 Montevideo became a vicariate and received its first bishop only in 1878. At the time the Constitution was signed (1830) Catholicism was recognized as the official religion. But the influence of the Church steadily declined in the 19th and in the opening decades of the 20th century. Anti-clerical governments made marriage a purely civil contract, legalized absolute divorce, forbade religion to be taught in the State schools, sought to convert religious festivals into purely secular holidays, broke off diplomatic relations with the Vatican in 1915, and four years later brought about the separation of the Church and the State. This opposition showed itself particularly towards the hierarchy.

Although Leo XIII created two new sees in Uruguay—Melo and Salto—in 1897, the government refused to allow them to be occupied until 1919. When Archbishop Soler of Montevideo died in 1909 the anti-clericals would not permit a successor to be appointed, so that for ten years the whole Church in Uruguay was governed by an Apostolic Administrator. The highwater mark of hostility towards the Catholic religion was reached under Batlle y Ordóñez, an apostate, who was President of Uruguay from 1903 to 1907 and from 1911 to 1915.

73. During the past quarter of a century, however, the Church has enjoyed peace and tranquility. Catholics have been exercising a much greater influence upon public affairs. Thus a non-clerical Catholic party played a very vital part in the framing of the new Constitution that was approved in 1934. The leading daily newspaper in Uruguay, *El Bien Publico,* applies the principles of the papal encyclicals to political, economic and social questions of the day. As a symbol of more friendly relations with the Church, the government in 1939 resumed diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

74. While these proofs of progress are undeniable the long period of anti-Catholicism has had its effect. For example, when the Most Reverend Michael Paternain C.SS.R. became Bishop of Melo in 1929, he found that there was only one resident pastor for approximately 20,000 Catholics in his own episcopal city. Similar conditions prevailed in the other two dioceses of the country. That there has been little improvement since that time may be judged from the fact that there were in 1946 only 141 diocesan priests, even though the overwhelming majority of the people are Catholics. The number of the regular clergy does not exceed 250 and many of these are foreigners. The parishes, especially in the rural sections, are usually quite extensive and it is impossible for the priest to give adequate spiritual care to all of his people. Many men and women are nominal Catholics, go through merely the civil ceremony of marriage, and make use of the absolute divorce which the State allows.

75. Uruguay is justly proud of the fact that she has the lowest rate of illiteracy in South America. But, unfortunately, the laws forbidding religious instruction in the State schools is still rigorously enforced. Well-to-do Catholics are able to pay the necessary tuition and send their children to the splendid private schools of the Jesuits, the Salesians, the Capuchin nuns and other Religious communities. But the poorer and larger portion of the people cannot do so, nor are they able to build and support a parochial school. Owing to the scarcity of priests, large numbers of the children do not receive any solid training in their religion outside of school time.

# 10.

# Venezuela

76. According to the latest statistics, Venezuela has approximately 4,000,000 inhabitants. Of these 75 per cent are whites and Mestizos, 20 per cent Negroes and Mulattoes, and 5 per cent Indians. The whites and the Mestizos are the principal inhabitants of the Andean highlands, the political, economic and social center of the country. The Negoes and Mulattoes are usually found in the hot and humid coastal regions and are workers in the oil-fields. The Indians have been confined to the Goajiran peninsula and to the swampy lands bordering on Brazil and British Guiana. Venezuela has been the classical land for revolutions, having had fifty-two of them between 1830 and 1905. These revolutions have often meant fundamental changes in the basic laws of the land, e.g., the overthrow of the government in 1945 was followed by a new Constitution in 1947, which was the twenty-second one in the history of Venezuela. In spite of this political instability Venezuela is today one of the richest countries in the world, due to the revenue from her numerous oil-wells.

77. Opposition towards the Church showed itself earlier and more completely in Venezuela than in any other republic of South America. Throughout the greater part of the 19th century, particularly during the political domination of Guzmán Blanco (1870-89), there was a systematic campaign to discredit the clergy and to weaken the influence of the Church. Two of the Archbishops of Caracas, Méndez and Guevara, together with a number of priests were driven into exile for refusing to sanction anti-Catholic laws. Religious Orders were suppressed, priests were deprived of most of their means of support and of the right

to inherit property, many of the churches were confiscated and turned over to profane uses, and the seminaries were forced to close. Religious instruction was forbidden in the State schools, marriage was declared a purely civil contract, and absolute divorce was allowed.

78. This persecution resulted in the Church becoming too subservient to the State and likewise opened the door to unworthy priests, who brought discredit upon the clerical state. The number of the priests declined at an alarming rate, so that in 1883 there were only 249 for the 639 parishes in Venezuela. A gradual reaction in favor of the Church began after the downfall of Blanco in 1889. Seminaries were allowed to reopen in 1900, though under strict government supervision. Religious communities in foreign countries, particularly Spain, were invited to send some of their members for educational and missionary work. Catechetical instruction was permitted in the State schools for one or two hours a week. But the Church nevertheless is in a weakened condition. The number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life is totally inadequate. Many Catholics are ignorant of their religion and careless about practising it. In 1938 about 60 per cent of the children born there were illegitimate. The prejudice against the Church as an institution, and particularly against the clergy, that was characteristic of the 19th century in Venezuela, has not disappeared entirely in the 20th century.

79. In colonial times the Capuchins had been the principal missionaries among the savage and semi-savage Indians of eastern Venezuela as well as those in the Goajiran peninsula. During the wars for independence they were regarded as sympathizers with the Spanish monarchy. Hence when the rebels gained control they immediately seized the forty-one members of this Order, executed eighteen of them on May 17, 1817, and threw the rest into prison, where sixteen eventually died and from which seven managed to escape. This barbarous act, together with the later hostility of the government against Religious communities in general, led to the ruin of the missions. Various rulers of Venezuela attempted to continue the work of the mis-

sionaries among the Indians by purely secular methods, all of their plans ended in failure. Finally admitting defeat, President Rajas Paúl in 1890 formally invited the Capuchins in Spain to resume the work of their confrères in Venezuela.

80. The lack of cooperation, however, and the constant interference of the civil officials prevented the erection of a permanent mission until 1921. Once convinced that the work would continue, the Holy See in 1922 separated part of the diocese of Guayana and made it the vicariate of Caroni. The same diocese was again divided in 1932, and the prefecture of Alto Orinoco was formed and placed in charge of the Salesians. In 1943 the Spanish Capuchins took over the newly-created vicariate of Machiques in the Venezuelan part of Goajira and in the Sierra of Perijá. At the present time there are in Caroni 22 Capuchin priests, 1 secular priest, 9 Capuchin lay-brothers, 19 Capuchin nuns, and 7 Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; in Machiques there are 8 Capuchin priests and 4 lay-brothers; in Alto Orinoco there are 6 Salesian priests, 10 Salesian lay-brothers, and 4 Sisters of Mary, Help of Christians.

81. The missionaries here labor under tremendous handicaps. There are too few of them for the many spiritual duties they are constantly asked to perform. Though vast government projects are under way throughout Venezuela, very few material improvements have thus far been made in the territory of the missionaries. Thus the priests must make long journeys, that sometimes last for two or three weeks, almost entirely on foot in a climate noted for its terrific heat and humidity. Since on these missions sleeping accommodations are often most primitive, the priest often returns home physically exhausted or the victim of some fever or disease which incapacitates him for a time. It is, naturally, not an easy thing to revive the practice of Catholicism among people who were so spiritually abandoned during the 19th century. Thus on a three weeks' mission to the Kamarkotos Indians, in which a bishop and two priests took part, the total number of Holy Communions was fourteen. Some of the Indians here are not only pagans but savages, as was shown in March, 1947 when they attacked and killed at least two members of the Philips Scientific

Expedition that was exploring the unmapped region of Venezuelan Guayana. The work of converting these pagan Indians proceeds slowly; during the first two years in the vicariate of Machiques 218 of them entered the Catholic religion. A very important hindrance to the success of the missions is that the government allots only 50,000 bolivars annually to the vicariates and prefecture. This sum of money, about $16,500, is insufficient for the building and maintenance of churches and schools, as well as for providing the Indians with the food, clothing and medicine that they need.

82. Some hopeful signs for the future are: (a) by teaching the principles of cattle-raising, farming and personal hygiene to the Indians the missionaries are not only raising their standard of living but are also predisposing the pagan Indians to become Catholics; (b) a minor seminary has already been established at Upata in the vicariate of Caroni, which may become the cradle of a native Indian clergy; (c) on November 25, 1945 there was formed at Caracas a society called "Patronato Nacional Pro Indigenas." The aim of the members is to have closer collaboration with and to give more generous support to the missionaries working for the material and spiritual benefit of the Indians. This society is not only a well-deserved tribute to the zeal and self-sacrifice of the priests and Religious in Caroni, Alto Orinoco, and Machiques, but, since it also has the approval of the government, it may well mark a turning-point in the history of the missions in Venezuela.

# 11.

# The Guianas

83. Spain and Portugal were powerful enough to dominate the whole of South America with the exception of a small section in the northeastern corner that fell into the hands of Great Britain, Holland and France, and which they retain up to the present time. These three colonies comprise an area of approximately 175,000 sq. miles and have about 592,000 inhabitants, distributed as follows: British Guiana 365,000; Dutch Guiana, 190,000; and French Guiana 37,000. The total population of the whites in the Guianas is about 20,000. While most of them are naturally from the three above-mentioned nations, we also find there people from other parts of Europe; thus in British Guiana there are more than 8,000 Portuguese. The number of Indians is equally small, the average membership of the ten known tribes being about 2,000. Approximately half of the people are Negroes whose ancestors were brought from Africa as slaves. The abolition of slavery by Britain in 1833, France in 1848, and Holland in 1863 created an urgent need for cheap, agricultural laborers. Natives of India, both Hindus and Moslems, were therefore imported to the colonies, and it was not until 1913 that the British officials at Delhi put an end to this practice that often led to grave abuses. There are about 200,000 of these East Indians, as they are popularly called, to distinguish them from the aborigines. In the course of time other Asiatic peoples, such as the Chinese and Javanese, settled in these colonies. Thus the Guianas possess a more diversified population than any other part of South America.

## British Guiana

84. The real beginning of the Catholic Church in British Guiana dates only from the early 19th century when secular priests were called in to minister to the Catholic settlers, soldiers, and some Arawak Indians who had been converted by the Spanish missionaries in Venezuela. In order to provide for their spiritual needs more effectively British Guiana was made a vicariate in 1837. Ten years later, at the request of Bishop Hynes, the Vicar-Apostolic, the Ursuline nuns at Athlone, Ireland, sent six of their members to Georgetown, the capital of the colony. In 1857 the Holy See transferred the ecclesiastical government of British Guiana to the English province of the Society of Jesus. With the exception of one or the other secular priest the Jesuits have been the only clergy to labor there since that date. In 1894 the Sisters of Mercy, founded by Catherine McAuley, began their first foundation in the colony.

85. In British Guiana there are now thirty Jesuit priests. About one half of these are stationed in Georgetown, while the others are assigned to the interior of the country, which in all the Guianas consists mainly of swamps and jungles. The two Religious communities of women are engaged mainly in the teaching of youth, both in the government schools where religious instruction is a part of the curriculum, as well as in their own private schools. Both of them also are in charge of orphanages, conduct convert classes, and visit the homes of the poor, the sick and the aged in order to provide them with food, clothing and medicine. The Sisters of Mercy for many years have cared for those afflicted with leprosy, a disease by no means uncommon in this part of South America.

86. Some of the principal obstacles to the work of the Church are the following: (a) There is a serious shortage of priests and nuns, and vocations to the clerical or religious state are extremely rare among the natives of the colony. The two sisterhoods have had to appeal to the American branch of their institutes for help. At the present time there are ten Sisters of Mercy and seven Ursuline nuns from the United States in British Guiana. (b) The

intense heat and humidity during the six months from July to January take a heavy toll on the strength of men and women accustomed to the colder climate of Europe and the United States. (c) The work in the interior, where most of the aborigines live, offers special difficulties. During the rainy season from April to September the rivers rise so rapidly that travel is almost impossible because of the lack of bridges. One of these parishes of the interior extends for 170 miles and has so many obstructions on the so-called roads that an auto or even a horse cannot be used, and the priest must walk for 110 miles on foot in order to reach all of his parishioners. (d) The character of the people in general is a serious obstacle to the Church. The moral standard has been lowered by the presence of thousands of people who do not accept the principles of Christianity. For example, illegitimacy has become so common that it is no longer considered a disgrace even by the better class of people in the colony. In spite of these obstacles the Church has made progress. The number of Catholics is about 35,000 and, according to the *Missionary,* a publication of the English Jesuits, there are about 1,000 converts a year.

## Dutch Guiana

87. Like British Guiana the history of the Catholic Church in Dutch Guiana, or Surinam as it is generally called, may be said to begin only in the 19th Century. There had been attempts at a permanent Catholic settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries but none of them were successful. The real founders of the Church in Surinam were two secular priests, Fathers Wennekers and Horst who arrived there in 1817. Sufficient progress was made, despite the anti-Catholic prejudice of the Dutch officials at home and in the colony, so that a prefecture could be established there in 1825. This was made a vicariate in 1866 when Pius IX assigned Surinam as a mission-field for the Redemptorists of Holland. At the present time there are 62 Redemptorists, 39 of whom are priests and the rest lay-brothers. To aid them in their work are 27 Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy

from Tillburg, Holland, and 182 Sisters of Charity, most of whom are also natives of Holland.

88. Many of the difficulties in Surinam are similar to those in British Guiana. (a) Illegitimacy is one of the gravest vices. Thus in one year of 1,214 baptized children 724 were illegitimate. It is this fact which is mainly responsible for the failure to develop a native clergy. However, some success has been had with the girls, for twenty-one of the female Religious in the colony are native-born. (b) The climate is enervating and this usually requires a frequent change of personnel that hinders the effectiveness of the missionary work. (c) The people in the country-districts live in small communities, usually at great distances from one another, and the only way to reach them is to travel by river. This is not only tedious but often quite dangerous owing to the rapids, the water-falls, and during the rainy season when the water rises as high as thirty feet. (d) The Moravian Brethren have been in Surinam since 1766, are most active in propagating their religion, which numbers about 36,000 members, and are very hostile to the Catholic Church. (e) Finally, in Surinam there are the "Bush-Negroes," so-called because they are the descendants of those colored persons who decades ago fled into the forest rather than endure slavery. They usually live in places far remote from civilization, have a hereditary hostility towards the white people, even though they no longer wage war against them, and are deeply attached to superstitious beliefs and practices as well as to polygamy, concubinage and drunkenness.

89. These obstacles have not discouraged the missionaries who, to quote Father Considine, "have developed a vigorous Catholic life, remarkable for such an ill-favored corner of the tropics." The Religious have built sixty-one churches, fifty-seven parochial schools, which are attended by 10,500 pupils, hospitals for the sick and aged, orphanages, as well as an asylum for the lepers. The boys are taught, besides the truths of faith, how to plant crops, work at some trade, and the girls how to sew, cook, weave, etc. In some parishes the priests have organized the

Catholic Boy Scouts and a similar organization for girls. There are two agricultural communities composed of Catholic Hindus and of Catholic Javanese. The number of Catholics is growing steadily year by year. Almost all of the native Indians are Catholics. Conversions among the Negroes or Mulattoes in the towns and ranches, the Hindus, the Chinese and the Javanese are most encouraging. Only a comparatively small number of the Bush-Negroes have been won over to the Catholic religion, while conversions among the Moslems and the Moravian Brethren are extremely rare.

90. The glory of the Church in Surinam is Venerable Peter Donders C.SS.R., who labored there for forty-four years (1842-86), first as a secular priest and later as a Redemptorist. Of all the modern missionaries in South America he is the nearest to beatification. On March 25, 1945 the Sacred Congregation of Rites approved the heroicity of his virtue; because of his untiring zeal and ardent love for the social outcasts of the colony the decree stated: "He deserved to be called 'The Apostle of the Lepers'."

## French Guiana

91. French Guiana is the smallest and most backward of the three European settlements. No spontaneous stream of immigration was ever directed there and the compulsory colonization was usually so mismanaged as to end in failure. Since the middle of the 19th century it has been used as a penal colony, the best known of the five prison camps being "Devil's Island." Only a few whites reside in this colony; three Indian tribes, the Galibis, the Roucouyennes, and the Oyampis, who are semi-civilized but peaceful, lead a nomadic life in the forests of the interior; here, too, we find the same admixture of races as in British and Dutch Guiana, but the overwhelming majority of the people are Negroes or Mulattoes, most of whom are descended from the slaves who were liberated in 1848.

92. Since it was part of a Catholic nation the Church here was established in French Guiana in the 17th century, and was

subject to the authority of the Prefect Apostolic on the Island of Martinique. In 1731 it was made an independent prefecture, but did not become a vicariate until 1933, more than two centuries later. For many years the vicariate has been under the jurisdiction of the French members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, who have there fourteen priests and one lay brother. Seven priests from the Colonial Seminary of Paris have volunteered for this mission-field. Three communities of women, the Congregation of St. Joseph of Cluny, the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, and the Franciscan Missionary Sisters help the priests in their work. All of these seventy-one nuns, with the exception of the nine native-born women who have made their religious profession, are from France. About three-fourths of the people in this vicariate are Catholics; the rest are either Moslems, pagans or Protestants. Twelve converts to Catholicism were made in 1945. As in British and Dutch Guiana so here the priests have built churches, schools, orphanages, and also a hospital and a leper-asylum.

93. The priests and Religious here have the same problems as in the other two colonies. The one obstacle, peculiar to French Guiana, is the prison element in the colony. Many of the prisoners are embittered by the fact that they must remain here even after completing their sentence, because they have not enough money to pay for transportation to their homes. Steps are already being taken, however, to remedy this inhumane practice and eventually to do away entirely with the prison colony in Guiana.

# 12.

# Conclusion

94. A word of recognition is due to the Catholic missionaries from the United States in South America. They number 377 (221 men and 156 women), and represent thirty-one different religious institutes (thirteen of men and eighteen of women). They are to be found in every republic and colony except in Dutch and French Guiana. They are usually assigned a mission territory where the standard of living is below even the poorest in our country, and where, because of the heat and humidity, the primitive modes of transportation, and the indifference of the people resulting from decades of spiritual neglect, they must practise infinite patience and continual self-denial. Their zeal in the catechizing of children, where a parochial school is impossible, and their skill in organizing societies that draw the people closer to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, have awakened the admiration of the local clergy.

95. Their only ambition, needless to remark, is to win as many souls as possible for Christ, and yet they are indirectly accomplishing something more. They are gradually breaking down the belief, once so common throughout South America, that United States and Protestantism were synonymous terms. They are repairing the harm done by American business men who formerly exploited the countries of South America in their hour of need. Though our State Department in past years has overlooked the importance of the Catholic religion in South America, it is the only bond that unites the people of that vast continent, who differ in race and language, and who are so often isolated from one another by geographical barriers. These Catholic missionaries from the North, therefore, who are strengthening this bond of union, are the truest exponents of the "Good Neighbor Policy," which aims to promote hemispheric solidarity by bringing the United States and South America closer together.

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# Study Outline

Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.

## Part 1. Paragraphs 1-24

During the colonial period in South America the missions flourished. The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 caused the greatest injury to mission work. When the revolutionary period opened in the 19th century the Church suffered.

At some time or other during the 19th century every South American country showed hostility to the Church. Anti-clerical legislation hampered missionary endeavor and in some instances ruined it.

In recent years violent hostility against the Church has disappeared. But the Church is weak there because of the lack of vocations and the shortage of priests and Religious. It is weak too because of the distribution of the clergy. Then, too, the topography of the country makes mission work difficult. Protestantism and Communism also are a hindrance to the spread of Catholicism.

Argentina, the second largest country in South America, while once controlled by the Liberals and Masons, today has been showing the results of well-organized Catholic Action.

In Bolivia wars and revolutions have impeded the work of the Church. Government interference, a shortage of priests and geographical barriers have slowed down Catholic progress. Then there is the special language problem with the Quichua and Amara Indians. In Eastern Bolivia there are 13 linguistic groups.

### Questions

What was the gravest injury done to the missions during colonial days?

What effect did the wars for independence have on the missions?

Name the four effects of anti-Catholic legislation.

What is the present attitude of South American governments toward the Church?

Name three defects in the South American Church.

How efficient is Catholic Action in Argentina today?
What has been the history of the Republic of Bolivia?
What did the greatest harm to the Church in Bolivia?
What is the special Indian problem in Bolivia?
What did Pius XI say of the Bolivian Indians?

## Part 2. Paragraphs 25-51

Brazil is the largest South American Republic. The greater number of Brazilians are Catholics and yet there are only 6,000 priests and 15,000 nuns in the country. Half of these are foreigners. Shortage of priests is felt especially in the four largest interior states. Most of the people in the interior are Catholics but ignorant of their Faith. Spiritism is a common practice in this area. The Indian population is on reservations. The interior of the country has always been noted for its savage tribes. At present missionary work among them is at a standstill.

Catholicism is the dominant religion in Chile. This country has the largest proportion of priests in South America, 1 for 3,000 people. Most of these priests are foreigners. The clergy is unequally distributed throughout Chile. Methodist, Presbyterians and Communists are active in Chile.

Nowhere else does the future of Catholicism seem brighter than in Colombia. It is the only country that has a concordat with the Holy See. Religious instruction is obligatory in all State-supported schools. In the past 60 years 8 native sisterhoods have been founded. Among the Indians the progress of the Church has been remarkable. Colombia has not relied on foreign missionaries alone, as have most of the other South American countries.

In Ecuador the whites control the political and economic life of the nation. There are 350,000. The majority of the remaining 3,000,000 can neither read nor write; Indians, Mestizos, and Negroes make up the majority. Here as in other parts of the continent the shortage of clergy is appalling. The greater part of the Indians have embraced the Catholic Faith. The Jivaros are an exception, and their conversion has proved difficult. The Salesians have been working among them since 1893.

### Questions

How did the Emperor Pedro II treat the Church?
What was the effect of separation of Church and State?
What was noteworthy about the Constitution of 1946?
Why has there been a dearth of native vocations?
What is the mission problem in the interior of the country?
What is the official policy toward the Indians?
What is the temper of the tribes in the interior of Brazil?
Is there a shortage of priests in Chile?
Who dominates the teaching profession in Chile?
What is the strongest anti-Catholic group?

### Part 3. Paragraphs 52-89

The history of the Church in Paraguay has been a tragic one. Wars and revolutions have been the order of the day since 1814 when independence dawned. Due to lack of priests the majority of Paraguayans are ignorant of their Faith. Civil marriage and concubinage are common. Mission progress, however, is being made, albeit slowly. Little has been accomplished with the savage Indians.

The population of Peru is 7,000,000, and almost ninety per cent Indian or Mestizos. On the whole the relations between Church and State have been friendly. Catholicism is the official religion. There are about 1,500 priests, one for every 10,000 Catholics. Among the Indians superstition is rife. Topographical and language factors make missionary work very difficult. However, the heroic labors of our missionaries, men and women, are slowly bearing fruit.

Uruguay is the smallest of all the South American republics. During the last 25 years the Church has enjoyed peace. Catholics have been exerting good influence on public affairs. There are, however, a large number of merely nominal Catholics. Uruguay is the most literate of the South American republics. Religious instruction is not allowed in State schools.

Venezuela had 52 revolutions between 1830 and 1905. From its beginning Venezuela persecuted the Church. The consequence has been that today many Catholics are not practical.

Priestly and religious vocations are inadequate for the spiritual needs of the people. Missionaries labor under big handicaps.

British, Dutch and French Guiana have a more diversified population than any other part of South America. The beginning of the Church in British Guiana dates only from the early 19th century. The number of Catholics at present is 35,000. There are about 1,000 converts a year. Catholic missionary endeavor in Dutch Guiana began in 1817. The number of Catholics is growing steadily year by year. The Church was established in French Guiana in the 17th century. At present about 75 per cent of the population are Catholics. Today there are 377 missionaries from the United States in South America.

## Questions

Summarize the history of the Church in Paraguay.
How does the lack of priests affect the Paraguayans?
How much progress has been made with the Indians of Paraguay?
What have been the relations between Church and State in Peru?
What is the youngest Church in South America?
What country has the lowest illiteracy rate in South America?
What is the chief source of Venezuela's wealth?
Who were the principal missionaries to Venezuela in colonial times?
Name some of the problems facing the missionary in Venezuela?
How has missionary work developed in the Guianas?

## A Note on the Author

**The Rev. Stephen J. McKenna, C.SS.R.,** was born in St. Stephen's parish, New York City, on May 18, 1903. His family moved to the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn in the following year, where he attended the parochial school in the Redemptorist parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In 1917 he began his studies for the priesthood in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemed at St. Mary's College, North East Pa. After his graduation in 1923 he entered the novitiate at Ilchester, Md., and made his profession on the feast of St. Alphonsus Liguori, August 2, 1924. His philosophical and theological studies were made at Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, N. Y., where he was ordained to the priesthood by the late Bishop Dunn of New York on June 16, 1929. His first assignment in the active ministry was to Sacred Heart parish in Baltimore, Md. In 1934 his superiors sent him to the Catholic University and there he specialized in Spanish history. He received his M.A. in 1935 and his Ph.D. in 1938. After completing his post-graduate course he was made a member of the faculty of Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, N. Y. In August, 1947 he was transferred to St. Clement's Mission House at Ephrata, Pa.

The study outline and questions for "Modern Missions in South America," were formulated by Gerald C. Treacy, S.J., who has prepared study club editions of various encyclicals.

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